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Letter dated 27 February 2012 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), I have the honour to bring to your attention the attached letter, dated 20 February 2012, from the Deputy Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Mr. Alexander Vershbow, transmitting the report on the international security presence in Kosovo covering the period from 1 July to 30 September 2011 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring this letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

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Please recycle

Annex

[Original: English]

In accordance with paragraph 20 of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), I attach a report on the operations of the Kosovo Force covering the period from 1 July to 30 September 2011 (see enclosure).

I would appreciate it if you would make this report available to the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Alexander **Vershbow**

Enclosure

Report to the United Nations on the operations of the Kosovo Force

Introduction

1. The present report on the Kosovo Force (KFOR) is provided in accordance with Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and covers the period from 1 July to 30 September 2011.

2. As at 30 September 2011, the total number of KFOR troops in theatre was 6,200. This includes an Operational Reserve Force battalion, which was deployed in theatre in the aftermath of the events of July 2011 in the northern part of Kosovo.

Security situation and operations

3. The overall security situation in theatre by the end of the reporting period remained calm but volatile in the northern part of Kosovo.

4. On 25 July, Kosovo Police regional operational special units tried to enforce a trade embargo at crossing points Gate 1 and DOG 31. This provoked a violent reaction by Kosovo Serb demonstrators in the northern part of Kosovo, who set up roadblocks on several roads leading to the crossing points. KFOR responded to the events by deploying its Quick Reaction Force, and the Commander of KFOR immediately engaged in discussions with local representatives to defuse the situation.

5. On 27 July, violence occurred at Gate 1, where Kosovo Serb demonstrators set fire to the Gate and a number of cars. KFOR troops used tear gas in order to extricate themselves from the crowd. On 28 July both Gate 1 and DOG 31 were reinforced by KFOR and the situation calmed down, although it remained tense. On 1 August, the Commander of KFOR requested reinforcements from the out-of-theatre reserve forces to sustain ongoing operations at Gate 1 and DOG 31. On 9 August, a jointly manned German and Austrian Operational Reserve Force battalion was deployed to the KFOR area of operation to provide increased capability.

6. On 28 August, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe visited KFOR, where he received briefings from the Commander of KFOR, Major General Erhard Bühler, on the security situation in Kosovo. In addition, he met with the Head of the European Union Rule of Law Mission (EULEX), General Xavier Bout de Marnhac, and visited KFOR troops in the northern part of Kosovo.

7. On 3 September, KFOR formally handed over policing tasks for the Montenegro border to the Kosovo Border and Boundary Police.

8. On 8 September, the NATO Military Committee visited KFOR. This visit provided the opportunity for national military representatives from KFOR troop-contributing countries to receive situational briefings from the KFOR Commander as well as other key players.

9. On 9 September, the change of command ceremony for the Commander of KFOR was held in Pristina, with Major General Erhard Drews assuming command from Major General Erhard Bühler.

10. On 15 September, the NATO Secretary General visited KFOR and held a series of meetings with the Commander of KFOR and all other key players in Kosovo. On 16 September, EULEX officially assumed Customs responsibilities from KFOR at Gate 1 and DOG 31. KFOR, in its third responder role, continued to support EULEX/Kosovo Police operations at the gates in order to maintain a safe and secure environment and freedom of movement.

11. On 25 September, KFOR, as third responder, conducted enhanced security operations in close coordination with EULEX and the Kosovo Police during the consecration of the Serbian Orthodox Church of the Holy Resurrection in Dakovica. This event was attended without incident by approximately 150 persons from the Serbian Orthodox Church.

12. On 27 September, in support of EULEX, KFOR enlarged the security perimeter around Gate 1 to enable EULEX to set up a vehicle checkpoint on the gate bypass recently installed by Kosovo Serb demonstrators. In reaction, Kosovo Serb individuals gathered at the scene in a protest which turned violent when demonstrators started throwing stones at KFOR soldiers. KFOR responded by firing rubber bullets. The situation quickly deteriorated and a number of explosive devices were thrown towards KFOR troops. During an attempt by Kosovo Serb demonstrators to breach the security perimeter, a KFOR soldier was physically assaulted and one weapon was stolen; other soldiers were injured. A KFOR soldier fired a single shot in self-defence, striking an attacking demonstrator in the leg. The Commander of KFOR arrived at the scene to personally assess the situation. Later that day, the situation calmed down, protesters dispersed and the situation remained quiet.

New North Atlantic Treaty Organization tasks

13. Early in the reporting period, Kosovo Security Force (KSF) units participated in a joint exercise with EULEX and KFOR, always in compliance with the KSF mandate. This exercise showed considerable improvement in the execution of their tasks by KSF units. The after-action review highlighted the ability of KSF with regard to core capabilities within its mandate. During the reporting period, KSF members attended a number of courses in accordance with the annual training plan. Courses were well prepared and instructors presented good professional skills.

14. A KSF Cadet School Programme board meeting was convened from 18 to 20 July. Forty candidates were interviewed, and this process resulted in the selection of 10 of them. Training commenced on 5 September. Over the years, the KSF Cadet School Programme has proved to be very effective. On successful completion of the five-year programme, these KSF members will receive a university degree (Columbia University, distance learning).

15. During the reporting period, KSF conducted the following engineering projects: suspected mass grave investigation at Zhilivoda; continuation of the KSF Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company's demining operations in Xerxe-Dragash, Raushiq-Peja, Vushtrri and Ferizaj; clearance of the mined area in the vicinity of Podujevo, where 17 anti-personnel mines were found and destroyed; road construction (5 km) between Burnik and Grebno, in Ferizaj and Strpce municipalities.

16. Recently, the NATO Headquarters Civil Emergency Planning Committee extended support to KFOR, to continue KSF training contributions from Finland and Bulgaria. Finland contributes to two courses for KSF, one on hazardous materials and the other on firefighting. Both courses will be conducted locally in the KSF civil protection regiment. Bulgaria has offered to conduct a vehicle rescue and extrication course, at its national training centre.

Summary

17. KFOR, in close coordination with EULEX and the Kosovo Police, continued to work towards guaranteeing a safe and secure environment and freedom of movement for all citizens in Kosovo. The situation in the northern part of Kosovo is still potentially volatile and several roadblocks continue to hamper the freedom of movement for the local population, EULEX and KFOR troops. Illegal bypasses at the Administrative Boundary Line and smuggling activities constitute a persistent problem. KFOR continues to monitor the situation closely and maintains its deterrent posture to react quickly and decisively if necessary.